

A
 REVIEW
 OF THE
 STATE
 OF THE
 BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, July 7. 1709.

I Have been talking of the Happiness of Nations consisting in the Increase of People—And have dwelt pretty much upon the real Advantages of entertaining Numbers of Foreigners among us, be they *Palatines* or others—I find your Mouths full of Objections, and I could spend a great Deal of Time in confuting those Objections; but I am sorry to say it, the Difficulty is in your Tempers, not in your Reasons—There is a Kind of native National Aversion rooted among us, tho' we were all Strangers our selves, tho' a *Syrian* ready to perish was our Father, tho' we came hither as Refugees, OR WORSE, and were nourish'd and fed, and this Country has been a nursing Mother to us; yet we

have a Principle of Aversion to other Strangers settling among us, be it that their Numbers would more compleatly cultivate and improve our Land, encrease our Produce, encrease our Labour, and by Consequence our Wealth, yet we will not, because we will not—We will not have Strangers settle among us, because we will not.

Some tell us, it will lower the Price of Wages, and under-rate the Labour of the Poor—And very learnedly they argue, that this will of Course lower the Price of Provisions, and that will lower the Rent of Lands—Rent of Lands falling, sink the Value of our general Fund, lower the Taxes, and by Consequence our Strength in War,

War, which, it is apparent, now depends upon our Wealth of Money, not the Number or Valour of our Men—And all these Consequences I readily own.

But on the contrary, I shall at any time make it appear, that this Encrease of People shall raise the Wages, because it shall encrease the Labour of the Poor—I do confess, I am not of the Opinion of some, who, to encrease the Export of our Manufactures, would reduce their Value, and consequently the Labour of the Manufacturer, from the general receiv'd Maxim, that Cheapness causes Consumption—And I doubt not in the Process of this Debate to prove, that keeping up the Goodness, that is the true Merit of our Manufacture, is the true Way to encrease its Consumption—And I must lay down a Maxim or two in our Manufacture in general, that perhaps every one will not grant, but which I have a full Satisfaction of the Truth of—*Viz. That it is already sold cheaper, than any Nation in the World can make it.*

If it be said, that the *Dutch* and the *French* undersell us in *Spain*, *Italy*, *Turky*, &c. I answer, it is a vulgar Error, all Price of Goods is dear or cheap in Proportion to Goodness—And all Labour or Wages for Labour is dear or cheap in Proportion to the Rate of Provisions—

The *Dutch* and *French* sell a Manufacture cheaper than we, and a Manufacture that mimicks or imitates ours—But neither the *Dutch* or *French* can make any Part of the Woollen Manufacture equal in Goodness to ours, lower in Price than we—But this is by the way; I shall be more at large in this Article hereafter.

Mean time I insist upon this—That Numbers of People among us will neither take any Labour from our Poor, nor sink the Price of the Labour of our Poor—But rather the contrary.

To make this clear—Pray, look into any of your Neighbouring Countries, nay, look into some Parts of our own, and tell me, if this is not a general Maxim all over the World, that where there are the fewest People, there the Labour of the Poor is cheapest, and the Wages lowest—

I except our European Colonies in America, only for evident Reasons which make the Difference, particularly the Dependence on Europe, by whose Commerce the Produce of their Country is taken off. But else look round you, and you will find, that Want of Numbers of People has always made a Want of Work for the People, and consequently Want of Price—For as Numbers of People decrease, Trade and Employment will more encrease.

By the same Rule, as your Numbers encrease, Trade and Employment must encrease—And every Number that you add—adds still some Labour to be done, more than that Number can do—Upon this depends the whole Argument, and I think, it is easie to make it out—If a Million of People were to plant here—They would make more Labour than they could perform; this Overplus of Labour then must fall upon those that were here before—And this is the Reason, that in this very Nation as our People encreas'd, our Wages, Provisions and Land have risen in Value—Look back to the Days of *Edward III.* in *England*, you will find us then a flourishing, victorious Nation—Yet a fat Sheep was sold at 3 s. 4 d. a fat Ox at 20 to 30 s. a Lamb for 6 d. and the like. And how was Labour? The Wages of the Poor were to some 1 d. a Day; to many, less; to some few 2 d. to Artificers 3 d. or 4 d. *per diem*, which was great Pay.

How has this encreas'd, but just as your People have encreas'd? With them has come Trade, Trade brought Wealth, People improv'd Land, and encreas'd Manufactures; this brought home Money, Money better'd their Way of Living, encreas'd Work, Work encreas'd Wages, Wages rais'd Provisions, Provisions encreas'd the Rent of Land—And thus you grew rich, just as you grew populous—And thus you may go on to be more populous and more rich, if you please.

I grant again, there are Ways to plant People so among us, as to make them for the present burthensome to us, and destructive to our Manufactures—For Example, should you take these ten
Thousand

Thousand *Palatinos*, be they more or less, and place them at *Colchester*, or at *Exeter*, or to come nearer in *Spittlefields*, and there force them to get their Bread by Spinning, Winding, &c. the common Works of the Manufacturers—The poor People would starve themselves, and the Poor they came among immediately, because wanting Bread, they would be oblig'd to work for little or nothing—But as there are in all Cases, Ways to turn our Blessings into Curses, so this does not at all argue, but that they may at the same time be so order'd, as to be made an Advantage to us; and that is what I argue for in placing them upon our unimprov'd Lands.

There, every ten Thousand, that shall be planted in *England*, will add to our Produce, and encrease the Labour of the whole Body, and consequently enrich us.

But now I am talking of our Poor, and indeed we are fill'd with the Clamours of our People about our Poor—With the least Reason, and the least Project of Rectification, that ever was seen in any like Case in the World—I might say—It is our rich Poor, not our needy Poor, that are the clamorous and uneasie People of this Nation—And these want sundry Regulations, which I cannot speak to now—

However, being thus entred upon the Subject of our Encrease of People, and improving our Lands, I shall lay down a few Heads, in which, I suppose, the general Management of our People in *Britain* is defective; and which, if they suffer'd a due Regulation, would open your Eyes to the several Advantages of Commerce, and to the true Methods of planting and managing not the People you have only, but all those that shall seek Settlements and Refuge among you.

I shall only lay you down Generals at present, and speak to them apart, as Occasion presents.

First, The several Impositions and Encroachments we make upon the industrious Poor in the ordinary Methods of Trade, whether by Corporation-Tyranny, as I call it, which confines Men to labour in such or

such Places only—A Thing which requires a long Series of Regulation in *Britain*; or by the Oppressions of Usury, Tally-men, Pawn-brokers, &c. a Sort of People, who, as some say, and I am apt to believe, in this very City only, gain 100000*l.* yearly, out of the Labour and Industry of the Poor, by horrid Extortions and Barbarisms, which I am very loth to rake into—Such as extravagant Interests, Advance-Money, &c. upon Pawns and Pledges—Including a little, or rather not a little, *Exchange-Usury*, or *Lombard-street Extortion*, such as Discounts on Bills, advancing Money for Customs, &c.

We have been told of charitable Endeavours to settle Funds for the easing the Poor in such Cases as these, and delivering them from the Necessity of submitting to such Extravagancies—If such Endeavours are built upon a right Foot, they deserve, and cannot miss of Encouragement, if we have really any Disposition to render Trade flourishing, and make the poorer Sort of our trading labouring People easie.

Secondly, The incredible Swarm of the begging Poor in *South-Britain*, especially where there is so plentiful Provision made for truly necessitous, and such strict, tho' ill executed, Laws to punish the vagabond mendicant Poor—And here I cannot but put in a Word, in Behalf of our *North-British* Poor, for whom no Parochial Provision is made, and to note, that, after all we can say of the Poverty of *Scotland*, were the Laws for Maintenance of the Poor the same in *Scotland*, as they are here, or something like it, there would be fewer Beggars there than in any Part of *England*—But to have People beg in *England*, where Wages for Work is so dear, Provisions so plentiful, establish'd Allowance to the really Indigent so considerable, is a Shame to our Government, and declares, we have the best Laws, the worst executed of any Nation in the World.

Thirdly, The Deficiency in spreading our Manufactures in the most proper Places of *Britain*, by which Means the great Circulation of Trade, which is the Health of our Commerce, is obstructed, and the People